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ABSTRACT

Otterbein College, Ohio, is offering a 16-credit-hour comparative education program for prospective teachers, to provide opportunity through direct experience to expand the teacher candidate's concept of education, social values, and inter-cultural relationships. For the 1969-70 academic year 15 junior or senior elementary or secondary teacher candidates have been selected to participate in a 10-week term of study in Sierra Leone, West Africa. During the autumn term preceding the field study, they will study the culture, government, and educational system of Sierra Leone. While in Africa they will work with Sierra Leone teachers as teacher aides, attend some classes for teachers in a college or university, and prepare a research project on a topic related to education, social values, or culture of Sierre Leone. On return to Otterbein they will summarize their experiences and relate them to teaching situations they are likely to experience. The college supervisor who will work with the students in Africa will also conduct the seminars preceding and following the field experience term. While the primary objective is to prepare teachers better, it is expected that students not participating will also benefit through formal classroom sharing and informal student conversation. Evaluation will be an integral part of the $26,000-a-year program which is planned for 3 years of operation subject to annual evaluation. (JS)

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The Sierra Leone Experience
An Enriching Program for Teacher Candidates of Otterbein College
A Summary of the Program

Otterbein College is offering a program in comparative education for prospective teachers. The program provides through direct experience an opportunity to expand the teacher candidate's concept of education, social values, and inter-cultural relationships.

Sierra Leone, West Africa, was chosen for the pilot project because of the close ties many of the leaders in the country have with Otterbein College and the opportunity it affords students to analyze the role of education in economic, political, and social change in a developing nation. The proposed program has been approved by the Ministry of Education and other educational leaders of Sierra Leone and the Faculty of Otterbein College has approved the program to start during the 1969-70 academic year.

Fifteen students who have been formally admitted to the elementary or secondary teacher preparatory program of Otterbein College have been selected to participate in the Sierra Leone study during the Winter Term of the student's junior or senior year for a period of ten weeks. During the Autumn Term preceding the field study, the participating students will study the culture, government, and educational system of Sierra Leone. While in Sierra Leone, the students will work with the Sierra Leone teachers on a participation or teacher aid basis, attend some classes for teachers in a college or university, and prepare a research project on a topic related to education, social values, or the culture of Sierra Leone. On return to the Otterbein College campus, the students will be asked to summarize their experiences and relate them to teaching situations they are likely to experience.

The College will grant four courses (16 hours) of academic credit for the Sierra Leone project. While the primary objective of the program is to prepare

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teachers better, it is expected that students not participating in the project will also benefit through formal class sharing and informal student conversations.

Evaluation will be an integral part of the program. Data will assist in improving the Foreign Study Program as more will be learned about its operation. It is expected that the experience will change attitudes in the direction of aesthetic growth and appreciation. It will give the means for the participant to continue his life with a heightened awareness of himself, his world, and whatever understandings he gains can be applied throughout his life. He will expand his concept of education, social culture, inter-cultural relationships, and be of service to others. This experience will enable the participant to gain continuity of experience necessary for development of complex skills of planning and evaluation; to gain depth of understanding of the teaching role; to gain insight into the contributions of other people; and, to gain confidence in his development of leadership.

The program is planned for three years of operation subject to annual evaluation. A comprehensive study of the effectiveness of the program will be made after three years operation and recommendations will be made concerning the future of the program.

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A Case Study

A. Description and Development

The former Evangelical United Brethern Church and Otterbein College have a long history of concern for the people of Sierra Leone. Students from Sierra Leone have been attending Otterbein College almost continuously since 1886 and many of the school and government leaders of this developing Nation are graduates of Otterbein College.

Mrs. Mildred Stauffer, Assistant Professor of Education at Otterbein College, became very interested in Sierra Leone through some of the Sierra Leone students on campus and proposed a program of sending selected Otterbein students planning to teach, to Sierra Leone for an enriching experience. She visited school and government officials in Sierra Leone in the summer of 1968 to explore the possibilities with them. The interest was enthusiastic and she returned to Sierra Leone in the summer of 1969 to work out the details of assignments, housing and transportation.

Fifteen students, plus a list of alternates, were selected from the teacher education candidates in the Spring of 1969 to participate in the project. An orientation seminar was conducted for these students during the Autumn Term of the 1969-70 academic year. Each student has studied the culture, educational system and government of Sierra Leone in considerable depth and each student has prepared a formal research topic proposal. The research projects which are related to education, history, social values, or the culture of Sierra Leone will be carried out in Africa.

The participating students and a supervising Otterbein College professor will go to Sierra Leone during the last week of December for a period of ten

weeks. The first week in Sierra Leone will be spent in a college and a university where the students will hear lectures, participate in seminars and "sit in" on some classes for teachers.

After this brief period of preparation and orientation the students will be placed in schools throughout the country to serve as teacher-aids to the regular Sierra Leone teachers. The Otterbein College students, all of whom are juniors or seniors, are to take a learning role rather than a teaching role although they are expected to assist the teacher in the instructional program.

About one-half of the students' time will be spent in the classroom and about one-half of the time will be available for gathering data for the research project. Some of these projects involve library resources, but many of them will make heavy use of interviews of community, school and government leaders. The Otterbein College supervisor will visit the students periodically, but most of the research will be by the independent study method.

The students will come together in Freetown during the final week in mid-March to meet high level school and government officials and to depart.

A few days of planned activities have been arranged in Amsterdam on the way to Sierra Leone and in Zurich on the return trip. Schools will be visited in each city.

The participating students will take a seminar for follow-up, evaluation and research paper writing during the Spring Term on the Otterbein College campus. A copy of each of the reports will be available at Otterbein College for other students to use in their studies.

Otterbein College will award a total of four courses of credit (16 hours) for the project. Each of the two seminars on campus will carry one-half course credit (2 hours) and three courses of credit (12 hours) will be given for the term abroad.

B. Program Objectives

The objectives and purposes of the Sierra Leone Project include the following:

1. Enriched professional education experiences are merged with deep intercultural experiences for the participating students and their professor.
2. Through direct experience, an opportunity is provided to develop an understanding of the culture, history, economic conditions, and community life of other people which, in turn, should help the participants to see these aspects of life in the United States in a new perspective.
3. A better understanding of social needs and teaching methods in disadvantaged areas in the United States and abroad should be provided.
4. The sharing of the experiences of the participating students on campus should provide a greater world awareness through the college community.
5. For the participating students several individual opportunities are provided. They include
   a. a deepened understanding and appreciation for the function of formal education.
   b. a deepened understanding and appreciation of emerging and developing nations.
   c. an opportunity to develop individual resourcefulness, skills in evaluation, and to crystallize a philosophy of education.

d. an opportunity to study and work without constant supervision should develop self confidence in leadership ability.

e. skill in research and research paper writing.

C. Personnel Involved

The program was developed by Mrs. Mildred Stauffer, Assistant Professor of Education, with the support of the Chairman of the Education Department and the College Administration. The program proposal was approved through regular channels for curriculum matters and is coordinated by the Foreign Study Committee as are eight other programs offered by Otterbein College.

Mrs. Stauffer will supervise the students in Africa and she is responsible for the seminars preceding and following the term in Sierra Leone. It is expected that this responsibility will be rotated among other members of the Faculty in the years to follow.

D. Budget

The College budget for the Sierra Leone Project is as follows:

Salary for the College Supervisor	$ 3,300.00
Food Expenses	4,605.00
Travel Expenses	12,754.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	6,000.00
Total Budget	$26,689.00

Each student is expected to pay his own fare from his home to Kennedy Airport, New York and return from New York to his home. Each student is also expected to pay for all medical preparations, visa and passport.

The money to finance the program has been raised through private donations and a gift from the United Methodist Church.

E. Contribution to the Improvement of Teacher Education

The students who participate in the project will certainly have a greater awareness of the world community because of participating in this activity. They will have made a formal study of some aspect of a foreign culture while they were observing the people in their day by day activities. The teachers with a foreign study background should be able to better relate world studies to the students they teach. These teachers should also have a greater understanding and empathy for the students whose cultural background is different from their own.

All of the participating students will return to the Otterbein College campus where they willhave an opportunity to share their experiences with other students thereby influencing many other teacher candidates.

The model that has been worked out for this project may serve as a basis for other off-campus programs. Requests have been received from other colleges and universities already for this kind of information. Otterbein College will offer another program, on the pattern of the Sierra Leone project, among the Spanish-Americans in New Mexico in 1970-71.

The value of the project extends beyond teacher education. The Art Department of Otterbein College has started the nucleus of an African Art Center on campus and the Chairman of the Art Department of Otterbein College visited Sierra Leone, along with the developer of the project, to purchase art objects. The collection of library materials on Africa has been increased greatly since this project started. A faculty committee is now at work to develop and apply for funding an African Resource Center for Central Ohio.

F. Evaluation

Evaluation is an integral part of the program. The program is planned for three years of operation subject to annual evaluation. A comprehensive study of the effectiveness of the program will be made after three years operation and recommendations concerning the future of the program at that time.

A matched control group of students has been identified on the basis of college major, Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory and academic record. An instrument has been developed by Mrs. Stauffer, the project developer, with the help and cooperation of the School of Education, The Ohio State University, for measuring the changes in attitude, world awareness and teaching knowledge to be administered to each group.

A follow-up questionnaire to the participants and their school principals is planned for the three-year study. The questionnaire will be concerned with general teaching success and with strengths or weaknesses that may be attributed to the foreign study program.